

**U.S. Department of State
U.S. Mission to France
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

Funding Opportunity Title:	2022 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2022)
Funding Opportunity Number:	PDS-France-FY2022-01
Deadline for Applications:	January 30, 2022, 23:59 CET (round 1) April 3, 2022, 23:59 CET (round 2)
Assistance Listing Number:	19.040 – Public Diplomacy Programs
Total Amount Available:	\$10,000 – \$40,000

The Mission of the United States in France announces an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2022 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2022). We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2022 should submit proposals to GrantsFrance@state.gov mail address by January 30, 2022 (round 1) or April 3, 2022 (round 2). The U.S. Mission to France will evaluate all proposals and recommend one to three proposals per round for funding by the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). Projects will be evaluated by ECA against proposals received from alumni around the world. Given the current health situation, projects that can be easily adapted to virtual or hybrid virtual/in-person activities will be given priority.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AEIF provides alumni of U.S. sponsored and facilitated exchange programs with funding to expand on skills gained during their exchange experience to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their community. Since its inception in 2011, AEIF has funded nearly 500 alumni-led projects around the world through a competitive global competition.

This year, U.S. Mission to France will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support U.S.-France leadership on global challenges:

- Environment, climate change
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Entrepreneurship and economic development
- Women and girls' empowerment
- Cooperation in sciences, technology, health and innovation
- Countering violent extremism
- Media literacy and countering disinformation

Priority Region:

France

Participants and Audiences:

All applicants for awards must stipulate who their target audience is (age/gender/geographic breakdown) and estimate the expected audience reach through direct contact and, if possible, through indirect contact (via social media or traditional media).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Number of awards anticipated: Pending on ECA final selection

Awards amount: Between \$10,000 to \$40,000

Closing date for applications: January 30, 2022 (round 1) and April 3, 2022 (round 2)

Final decision date: No later than May 2022

Program performance period: Proposed programs should be completed in 6 to 12 months timeframe or less.

Anticipated program start date: Between April 2022 and September 2022

Type of Funding: FY2022 ECE.

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: The type of funding instrument, exact amount of funding, the scope of work, and the terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and U.S. Mission to France representatives after the application has been selected for funding.

The funding instrument will be either a grant or a cooperative agreement. Cooperative agreements will be used only for awards to organizations in case the proposed project involves substantial U.S. Mission involvement. "Substantial involvement" means that, after the award is approved for funding, U.S. Mission staff will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role. The U.S. Mission will not assume direction, primary responsibility, or a dominant role in project activities. These reside with the recipient for the project as a whole.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants:

The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>) or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team members in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni. A not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, or academic institutions must serve as partner for implementing project activities.

2. Cost Sharing:

Inclusion of cost share, while encouraged, is not a requirement of this opportunity.

3. Grant Program Area:

Proposals must address U.S.-France leadership on global challenges: Environment, Climate change, Diversity and Inclusion, Entrepreneurship and economic development, Women and girls' empowerment, Cooperation in sciences, technology, health and innovation, Countering violent extremism, Media literacy and countering disinformation.

Proposals that do not address the themes as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible.

Most of the project activities must take place in France (cross-border projects are possible but will require additional validation by correspondent U.S Mission). All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

4. Other Eligibility Requirements:

The grant will be processed with an organization that is a partner in the project. Eligibility is limited to: French registered not-for-profit organizations - including think tanks, foundations and civil society/non-governmental organizations; and non-profit educational institutions.

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.3 for information on how to obtain these registrations.

Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices with regard to beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one AEIF proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package:

Application forms required below are available on the U.S. Mission to France website, or at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/forms-repository.html>

2. Content and Form of Application Submission:

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official AEIF 2022 application and budget forms. Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
- The proposal addresses all questions in the official AEIF 2022 application form.
- All documents are in English.
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is submitted using the designated AEIF 2022 budget form.
- All pages are numbered.

The following documents and information are required:

a. Mandatory application forms:

- a. SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)
- b. SF424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)
- c. SF424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs) for organizations that did not complete their sam.gov registration at submission.

b. Project Team Information: At least two exchange alumni team members are required for a project to be considered for funding. Applications need to provide the name and contact information, describe the role each team member will have in the project, and their experience, qualifications, and ability to carry out that role. Applicants need to indicate what proportion of the team member's time will be used in support of the project.

c. Proposal Summary: A short narrative which outlines the proposed project, including challenge/s to be addressed, project objectives, and anticipated impact.

d. Project Goals and Objectives: The goal/s of the proposed project need to describe what the project is intended to achieve and include the objectives which support the goal/s. Objectives should be specific, measurable, and realistically achievable in a set time frame.

e. Project Methods, Design, and Timeline: A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal/s. This should include a description of the project's direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as a plan on how to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. The proposed timeline for the project activities should include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events. Applicants may also submit proposed workshop or training agendas and materials.

f. Local Project Partners: A list of partners who will support the proposed project, if applicable.

g. Communication Plan: The communication plan should include a communication and outreach strategy for promoting the proposed project. It may include social media, websites, print news, or other forms of media intended to use to share information about the project to beneficiaries and the public. Communications should include AEIF 2022, Exchange Alumni, and U.S. Mission branding.

h. Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal should outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives. This should include any outcomes showing a change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will measure the impact of planned activities.

i. Budget Justification Narrative: Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

Budget Restrictions: AEIF 2022 does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- ❖ Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- ❖ Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- ❖ Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- ❖ Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- ❖ Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments, or entertainment
- ❖ Academic or scientific research
- ❖ Charitable or development activities
- ❖ Provision of direct social services to a population
- ❖ Individual scholarships
- ❖ Social travel/visits
- ❖ Gifts or prizes
- ❖ Duplication of existing programs
- ❖ Institutional development of an organization
- ❖ Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in project
- ❖ Support for specific religious activities
- ❖ Fund-raising campaigns
- ❖ Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov):

Required Registrations:

Any applicant listed on the Excluded Parties List System (EPLS) in the System for Award Management (SAM) is not eligible to apply for an assistance award in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR, 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension." Additionally, no entity listed on the EPLS can participate in any activities under an award. All applicants are strongly encouraged to review the EPLS in SAM to ensure that no ineligible entity is included.

All organizations applying for grants must obtain these registrations. All are free of charge:

- Unique entity identifier from Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS number)
- NCAGE/CAGE code
- www.SAM.gov registration

Step 1: Apply for a DUNS number and an NCAGE number (these can be completed simultaneously)

DUNS application: Organizations must have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. If your organization does not have one already, you may obtain one by calling 1-866-705-5711 or visiting <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> NCAGE application: Application page here: <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx> Instructions for the NCAGE application process:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/Docs/US%20Instructions%20for%20NSPA%20NCAGE.pdf> For NCAGE help from outside the U.S., call 1-269-704-7930 Email NCAGE@dlis.dla.mil or dlaccontactcenter@dlis.dla.mil for any problems in getting an NCAGE code.

Step 2: After receiving the NCAGE Code, proceed to register in SAM.gov by logging onto: <https://www.sam.gov>. SAM registration must be renewed annually. You can also refer to the PDF "Instructions DUNS NCAGE SAM.GOV" available on the Embassy website.

4. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications are due no later than January 30, 2022, 23:59 CET (round 1) or April 3, 2022, 23:59 CET (round 2).

5. Other Submission Requirements:

All application materials must be submitted by email to GrantsFrance@state.gov.

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria: The U.S. Mission Public Affairs Sections will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. After an initial review, the U.S. Mission to France's Public Affairs Section will submit one to three top proposals from the country per round to the global AEIF 2022 competition.

The proposal(s) will be reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of regional and exchange program experts located at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications. The Selection Committee may or may not select France's proposal(s).

Relevance to Application Theme

The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the theme(s) of the competition. The narrative explains any relevant local context the D.C. Selection Committee may not be aware of in relation to this project. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy in nature (i.e. not development or military).

Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan

When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling. Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many will participate? How will they be selected?

Degree of Alumni Involvement

Projects must include the involvement of at least two (2) exchange alumni. They may be the project team leaders or collaborate directly with PAS in formulating the project. More than two alumni may comprise the team, however, the minimum is two. As the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, country of citizenship, and roles and responsibilities.

Participation and Support from Local Partners

The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement is a strong sign that there is community support and that the project will engage a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan

The proposal should include a clear plan and timeline for how and when the team will share information about the project. It is important to ensure that the U.S. Mission to France gets recognition throughout the process, if circumstances permit.

Evaluation and Impact of the Project

A monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how that data collection will be accomplished. Well-crafted indicators should be used to understand a program's progress toward the desired results. An M&E plan should be reviewed for the following: • Completion • Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators • Clear approach to monitoring • Adherence to SMART criteria • Feasibility of baselines and targets • Data quality plan • Capacity to implement plan

Sustainability

The proposal demonstrates whether the applicants considered how the project will continue to have positive impact after its conclusion.

Budget and Budget Narrative

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Disclaimer: This notice is subject to availability of funding. U.S. Mission France does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The grant award will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method: Payments will be made in at least two installments, as needed to carry out the program activities. The U.S. Mission to France reserves the right to amend the final amount to be reimbursed after reviewing the final progress and financial reports.

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted.

Applicants should be aware of the post award reporting requirements reflected in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

G. FEDERAL AWARING AGENCY CONTACTS

Questions about the grant application process should be directed to: GrantsFrance@state.gov.

The U.S. Embassy to France will be holding an online informative presentation for alumni to provide additional information and details about the 2022 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund, on Thursday, December 16, 2022, at 2.30 pm. Please click [here](#) to register.